

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL NOAA Travelers

FROM: R. J. Dominic
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 00-6
(New Nationwide Contract for TMC Services)

The following "NOTICE TO DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES" was previously sent to you by the Department of Commerce (DOC). The purpose of this NOAA Travel Advisory is to emphasize that this DOC notice **affects anyone traveling on behalf of NOAA** and is posted on the NOAA Travel Office Web-site www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/travel. Please note:

- C SATO Offices in all locations now have a centrally-billed account to charge airline tickets.
- C Employees currently using a SATO Office located on a military base will begin using SATO's Reservation Center located in San Antonio, Texas effective March 1, 2001.
- C The new contract with SATO requires that approved travel orders be faxed to your servicing SATO Office two to three days prior to travel. **SATO will not issue tickets without approved travel orders or trip authorizations.**
- C The "Notice to Department Employees" contains several bolded changes.

Please call Rachael Wivell or Pat Oliver in the NOAA Travel Office on (301) 413-3060 if you have any questions.

**NOTICE TO DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES
(Except Bureau of the Census and PTO)**

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT-WIDE CONTRACT FOR TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

On November 20, 2000, the Department awarded a contract for nationwide travel management services to SatoTravel (SATO). SATO will make reservations for common carrier transportation, lodging, and car rental for all Department of Commerce travelers located in the United States and its possessions.

SATO will maintain three on-site locations servicing travelers at the Hoover Building in Washington, DC; NOAA travelers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area from the Silver Spring, MD location; and NIST travelers at the NIST building in Gaithersburg, MD. Travelers in field locations who are currently being serviced by a SATO Office (**with the exception of employees currently using SATOs located on military bases**) will continue to use that SATO Office. Department travelers (**including invitational travelers**) located in field locations who are not currently serviced by a SATO Office will obtain service

from SATO's Reservation Center in San Antonio, Texas, in accordance with the implementation schedule listed below. To implement the provisions of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act, it is *mandatory* that travelers use SATO to make all of their reservations.

There are four separate implementation dates for which SATO will provide service under this contract to Department travelers depending on the location of your official duty station. Travelers should refer to the implementation schedule **located on the NOAA Travel Office Web-site** www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/travel to determine when their location will begin to use SATO's services under the new contract. However, all locations of employees who are currently using the services of a SATO Office (**with the exception of employees currently using SATOs located on military bases**), regardless of the date listed on the attachment for your State, were implemented on January 15. It is imperative that travelers do not utilize SATO services any sooner than outlined in the implementation schedule. Travelers should continue to use the services of their current travel management center, regardless of the date of travel, until the location of your official duty station is implemented under the new contract. SATO will transfer any travel records that have been made with your current travel management centers.

The following is additional information that travelers should be aware of when using SATO:

- C In order to ensure a smooth transition, travelers are encouraged to complete a SATO Profile Form before they expect to travel and fax it to the number listed on the form for their servicing SATO Office. The Profile Form can be found on SATO's website at www.satotravel.com/govtravelers/commerce or at the website for the Office of Executive Budgeting and Assistance Management (OEBAM) at <http://www.doc.gov/oebam/> under Travel Management. All information provided on the Profile Form will be treated confidentially and not sold or given to other commercial organizations. Completion of the form prior to traveling will ensure that your reservations are made in a timely and accurate manner.
- C Travelers who are currently serviced by a SATO Office (**with the exception of employees currently using SATOs located on military bases**) will continue to make reservations and obtain tickets as they have been doing.
- C Travelers in field locations who are serviced by SATO's Reservation Center should call 1-800-736-9899 to make reservations. Hours of operation at the Reservation Center are 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. your local time.
- C Approved travel orders **MUST** be faxed to your servicing SATO Office two to three days prior to travel. *Tickets will not be issued without approved travel orders or trip authorizations.*
- C SATO's emergency after-hours phone number for all locations is 1-800-827-7777. The emergency number is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. During normal working hours (8:00 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.), travelers should call their servicing SATO Office when experiencing ticketing problems. After normal working hours, they should call the emergency number. Under emergency circumstances when a travel order cannot be issued prior to travel, employees are required to use their individual Government-issued Citibank travel charge card to pay for their tickets. Since you are required to use your travel charge card in this situation, it is imperative that your travel card account not be delinquent in payments. (Refer to the Department-wide e-mail

sent on December 18, 2000, regarding mandatory use of the travel card and disciplinary action that may be taken against employees who misuse the card or are delinquent in making payments.)

- C If it becomes necessary to change your reservation with another airline at the airport and you have been issued an electronic ticket, you should request the original airline to issue you a paper ticket to be exchanged at the ticket counter of the new airline.
- C A justification for the use of non-contract carriers must be included on travel orders anytime a non-contract carrier is used. The list of justifications are contained in the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) in paragraph 301-10.107. The FTR can be found on the General Services Administration's (GSA) website at <http://policyworks.gov/fttr>.
- C An approved CD-334, Request for Approval of Extra Fare Air Accommodations, must also be provided to SATO *before* any premium-class tickets can be issued. Use of premium-class accommodations shall only be authorized and approved following the guidelines contained in paragraph 301-10.124 of the FTR.
- C Travelers are required to use U.S. flag air carriers for all air travel funded by the Government unless one of the exceptions contained in paragraphs 301-10.135 through 301-10.138 of the FTR can be met. A written justification for use of a foreign-flag carrier must be provided to SATO anytime a foreign carrier is used. If a justification is not provided, the Government cannot pay for your airfare on a foreign carrier.
- C For tickets issued (paper or electronic) by SATO's on site-locations, the bureaus will incur a transaction fee of \$11.90 for each domestic ticket and receive a rebate/credit of \$26.03 for international tickets. For tickets issued (paper or electronic) by the Reservation Center, the bureaus will incur a transaction fee of \$9.90 for domestic tickets and receive a rebate/credit of \$29.03 for international tickets. There are no charges incurred when reservations are made or changed prior to ticketing, but charges are incurred when the ticket is issued. Therefore, travelers should ensure that travel plans are firm before requesting that tickets be issued. No fees will be charged when only hotel and/or car rental reservations are made.
- C All tickets for domestic travel will be issued as electronic tickets and all tickets for international travel will be issued as paper tickets. SATO will e-mail the itinerary to the traveler or travel arranger at the time the reservation is made, and e-mail the invoice (invoice is a term used by SATO and it denotes a receipt not a bill to the traveler) to the traveler or travel arranger after the ticket has been issued. Paper tickets issued from the Reservation Center will have a charge of \$7 for overnight mail delivery. Travelers must notify SATO when reservations are canceled and return any unused hard copies of tickets to their servicing SATO Office.
- C Employees will periodically be asked to participate in either a telephone evaluation or be provided with survey forms to complete. Please take the time to participate in these surveys since this will help to ensure the quality of service being provided under this new contract. In addition, please notify your bureau travel contact listed below if you experience any problems with the procedures or services associated with this contract.
- C In addition to SATO providing service for official travel, they also provide assistance in arranging employee's leisure travel. Employees can call SATO's leisure travel office on 1-877-304-8456.